

29 April 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Management & Services
SUBJECT : Proposed Inscription for Nathan Hale
Statue

STATINTL

1. On April 22nd I tried out on the FAC [REDACTED] idea about the addition to the Nathan Hale statue of the quotation, "A Peculiar Service". The reaction was mixed. My own feeling--at that time--was positive, but several members felt it was overdoing the whole concept of the statue, and belaboring the obvious. One person suggested we seek a somewhat broader reaction from Agency personnel, and this prompted me to try it out on Bill Nelson. I thought his idea of trying the idea on the various MAG's made sense, but [REDACTED] tells me you're not enthusiastic about it. I would agree there is a danger in "over-staffing" the matter. In fact, the more I think about it, the more I come around to the idea that to add Dave's quotation would, in fact, be a case of gilding the lily.

2. I'm sure we both recall the mixed reception the statue itself received when it was first erected. Fortunately, the criticism has subsided, as [REDACTED] points out, and I think the statue has by now gained general acceptance. I'm afraid that by going back to the well a second time (by adding the quotation in some manner), we'd seem to be driving home with a sledge hammer the point which the statue itself, with its own memorable inscription, makes very clearly. I think we all appreciate the fact that Hale didn't risk the gallows for the sake of a fast buck. So I end up by being against the idea, although really for psychological, rather than artistic, reasons. (Perhaps we should have a Psychological Action Commission?)

3. If my view of this matter does not prevail, there is, in fact, a technical problem about how to add the inscription, and this would seem to be properly a matter for

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FAC consideration. Of the several suggestions made by the Logistics architects, their "A,2" seems to me to be the most suitable. (A small bronze plaque affixed to the right side of the pedestal as one faces the statue.) This is at best, however, an aesthetically awkward solution to the problem, by virtue of its imbalance. Because the present engraving on the pedestal extends as far as it does, it is not desirable to simply cover it up with a large bronze plaque. In other words, short of re-doing the pedestal entirely, I'm afraid any less radical attempt to solve the problem is going to have a tacked-on appearance.

4. While on the subject of the statue, I asked the owner of the foundry what it would cost to have a greenish patina applied, rather than the "Chocolate Soldier" version. He said about \$500, and he'd be glad to do it on site, if we wanted it done. What do you think?



Chairman
Fine Arts Commission

STATINTL

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